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Assembly California Legislature

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COMMITTEES:
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, RETIREMENT
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August 25, 1999

Rick Breitenbach
CalFed
1416 Ninth St.
Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

AUG 27 1999

RE: CALFED BAY-DELTA DRAFT EIS/R

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

The draft EIS/R for the CalFed Bay-Delta program lays the groundwork for a comprehensive, long-term solution for the Bay-Delta; however, there still remains questions regarding water quality, reliability of supply, financing and specific assurances.

The primary concern for Southern California is that there is a need for a reliable, affordable supply of high-quality water from the Bay-Delta. As it stands today, neither the quality nor the reliability of the region's supply of water from the Bay-Delta, through the State Water Project, is adequate.

My concerns remain the same as I expressed in my letter of January 27, 1999 regarding the Phase II report (copy attached), and are as follows regarding the Draft EIS/R:

- * **Water Quality:** It is incumbent on CalFed to establish standards or specific benchmarks so that progress toward improving drinking water quality can be measured. Reductions in the levels of bromides, total organic carbons and salinity in water delivered from the Bay-Delta must be accomplished. Urban water agencies must have standards or benchmarks to continue to safeguard public health and to comply with drinking water treatment regulations using workable, cost effective technology. Improving water quality is also necessary to encourage expanded water recycling programs.

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- * **Reliable Water Supply:** The draft EIS/R lacks in specificity that CalFed's plan will produce real increases in the reliable water supply available from the Bay-Delta. It is apparent that CalFed must work with urban water providers to develop plans and actions that will produce measurable increases. These plans and actions need to be based on a host of water management tools that CalFed is assembling, including conservation, transfers, recycling & **storage**.
- * **Storage Capacity:** CalFed is in the process of analyzing the specific amounts and types of reservoirs and groundwater storage that may be developed as part of its program. CalFed is mandated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to provide findings of fact that surface and groundwater storage be identified. We are all aware that increased storage is not needed to increase water supply from the Bay-Delta; however, increased storage is necessary to make the system flexible and adaptable so water-users can divert water when it does not adversely affect fish and when water quality is at its peak. Increased storage will also help open and establish the water transfer market.
- * **Conveyance Improvements:** The draft EIS/R emphasizes improving the way water flows through the Delta to the pumps in the South Delta. While this may sound good and look good on paper, these improvements may not achieve the stated objectives, specifically in the areas of water quality and fishery management. It is imperative that CalFed must work with all of the stakeholders to develop a meaningful process for making decisions about future improvements to Bay-Delta conveyance system, **which must include a new canal to carry some water around the Delta to the facilities that convey water to cities and farms in central and southern California.**
- * **Assurances:** There must be firm assurances by CalFed that the Bay-Delta plan will be carried out as originally envisioned and meet the objectives in a balanced, timely and equitable manner. It is foreseeable that any CalFed assurance package will require legislative actions.

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- * **Finance:** The financial plan that will be developed by CalFed for the preferred alternative must be explicitly linked to the contributions made by water-users and the benefits they receive from the program, and insures that all beneficiaries bear an equitable share of the costs. There will also be a need for CalFed to develop principles for allocating future costs.
- * **Ecosystem Restoration:** Restoration of the Bay-Delta ecosystem has to be part of the CalFed solution; otherwise water supplies for farms and cities will still be threatened by regulatory actions that aim to solve environmental problems by curtailing water diversions from the Delta. The Environmental Water Account, is an innovative market-based approach that would increase protection for fisheries and provide regulatory certainty for water users. It is essential for CalFed to establish guidelines and provide adequate funding and water for the account.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns as I have outlined in this letter.

Sincerely,



Bruce Thompson

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January 27, 1999

Lester Snow, Exec. Dir.
 CALFED
 1416 Ninth St.
 Suite 1155
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: CALFED PHASE II REPORT

Dear Mr. Snow:

I have a number of comments and concerns regarding CALFED's Phase II Report, my comments are as follows:

- * I am supportive of CALFED's efforts to date, the process has succeeded in bringing the interested and impacted parties to the table and keeping the focus that we must work together to find solutions to California's water problems.
- * There must be significant progress made in 1999 to fill in the gaps of the preferred alternative, specifically with regard to:
 - * Interim drinking water quality requirements.
 - * New surface & groundwater storage.
 - * Operation of an Environmental Water Account to restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem.
- * A significant step toward a comprehensive, long-term solution for the Bay-Delta system that meets the needs of water-users and the environment was taken with the revised Phase II Report. The report gives all parties a policy and framework for resolving problems that have developed over the past 150 years and is now a threat to the Bay-Delta as a reliable high-quality water supply and a viable healthy ecosystem.
- * I am encouraged that CALFED has taken a balanced approach that emphasizes a variety of water management tools to achieve goals that will benefit all of California. CALFED's concept of continuous improvement in the areas of water quality, reliable water supplies and restoration of the Bay-Delta ecosystem is to be commended.

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My concerns are:

- * The need for improved water quality to safeguard public health and meeting future drinking water standards is accomplished in a cost-effective manner and that water recycling projects are expanded.
- * The water supply from the Bay-Delta must be reliable and stable on a year to year basis so that planning for present and future needs can be done in an efficient manner. Since there is a well-defined connection between the ecosystem and a reliable water supply, a healthy ecosystem is necessary in the Bay-Delta.
- * CALFED must offer protections to all Bay-Delta water users that there will be regulatory certainty in how the Bay-Delta system is operated and that they will not suffer any reductions in Delta water supply levels in the future.
- * CALFED must be cognizant that while conservation and recycling programs are extremely important, they do nothing to improve the quality and reliability of water from the Bay-Delta. It is mandatory that construction of new ground-water & surface storage is necessary to meet water quality and reliability objectives, improve the situation for fisheries and establish a water transfer market.
- * CALFED must also recognize that if water quality and other objectives, as outlined in the Phase II Report, are not accomplished then additional measures will be necessary. These measures may include, but not limited to, increased groundwater & surface storage and/or a new canal to carry water around the Delta rather than through it.
- * CALFED has acknowledged urban California's long-term needs in water quality and has set excellent long-term goals; however it is necessary to set interim goals so that achievement of long-term objectives can be adequately measured and action taken if further steps are necessary. Establishing the Delta Drinking Water Council as mentioned in the revised Phase II Report would be necessary and useful.

Thank you for consideration of my comments and concerns as I have outlined in this letter.

Sincerely,

Bruce Thompson